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The greatest reproach leveled against Western culture is
829 that it is exclusive and inaccessible to the masses. This re-
517 proach is largely valid. Poetry, painting, and even music, shutting themselves up in ivory towers, become susceptible to numerous stylistic maladies. At the same time, however, their link with the everyday life of the people is considerably stronger than it seems to be at first glance. For example, avant-garde painting which is so "difficult" and "obscure" reaches a tremendous number of people through its influence on advertising, dress design, stage sets, interior decoration, and most important of all, perhaps, on the shape of universally used machines. In comparison with this, the "Soviet Empire" style, which is based on the painting on huge canvases of groups of dignitaries standing about in various positions and poses, is completely severed from everyday life. By destroying all experimentation in art, the Center confined its applied art (if one can speak of its existence at all) to a clumsy imitation of Western applied art which, however, is constantly renewed under the influence of experimental easel painting. When the cult of ugliness reigns in painting or sculpture and any daring passes as formalism, then applied art, cut off from its roots, is bound to prove sterile.

The multi-colored setting of Western life is subject to the law of osmosis. The average citizen of the West has no idea that a painter in a garret, a little-known musician, or a writer of "unintelligible" verse is a magician who shapes all those things in life which he prizes. Government officials give little thought to such matters for they consider them a waste of time. Since it is not a planned economy, the Western state cannot come to the aid of people working in the various arts. They go on, each pursuing his own chimera, sometimes dying of hunger; while nearby, wealthy men, not knowing what to do with

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their money, spend it on the latest whims of their be- 829
nighted souls. 517 ●

This order of things revolts a person from the East. In his country, anyone who displays any talent is used. In the West, the same man would have very little chance of success. Western economy squanders talent to an incredible degree; and the few who do succeed owe their success as often to pure luck as to native ability. In the countries of the New Faith, the counterpart to this waste lies in the fact that the capacity to follow the political line is a selective criterion by which the most mediocre often attain the greatest renown. Nevertheless, the artist or scholar in the East earns his living more easily than his colleague in the West. Even though the pressure of the Method is burdensome, its material compensations are not to be scorned. Many musicians, painters, and writers who had the opportunity to flee to the West did not do so because they felt it was better to compose, paint, or write somehow or other, rather than to teach or work in a factory, with no time or energy left in which to perfect their true craft. Many of those who were abroad returned to their own countries chiefly for this reason.

Fear of the indifference with which the economic system of the West treats its artists and scholars is widespread among Eastern intellectuals. They say it is better to deal with an intelligent devil than with a good-natured idiot. An intelligent devil understands their mutual interests and lets them live by a pen, a chisel, or a brush, caring for his clients and making his demands. A good-hearted idiot does not understand these interests, gives nothing and asks nothing—which in practice amounts to polite cruelty.

To the people of the East it is axiomatic that the basic 829
means of production should belong to the State, that they 471

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186 other man would dare undertake such measures? After
626 all, Russia stood firm against Hitler; the Revolution weathered the attack of enemy armies. In this perspective, His acts seem effective and even justified, perhaps, by an exceptional historical situation. If He had not instituted an exceptional terror in the year 1937, wouldn't there have been more people willing to help Hitler than there actually were? For example, doesn't the present-day line in scholarship and art, no matter how at odds it may be at times with common sense, effectually raise Russian morale in the face of the war that threatens? He is an infamous blot on the bright New Faith, but a blemish we must tolerate for the moment. And indeed we must even support Him. The "sacred fire" has not gone out. When victory is achieved, it will burst forth again with its old strength, the bonds He imposed will fall away, and relations between nations will operate on new and better principles. This variety of Ketman was widespread if not universal in Russia during the Second World War, and its present form is a rebirth of an already once-deceived hope.

626 *Aesthetic Ketman*[1] is born of the disparity between man's
517 longings and the sense-satisfactions the New Faith offers. A man of taste cannot approve the results of official pressure in the realm of culture no matter how much he applauds the latest verses, how many flattering reviews he writes of current art expositions, nor how studiously he pretends that the gloomy new buildings coincide with his personal preferences in architecture. He changes completely within the four walls of his home. There one finds (if he is a well-situated intellectual) reproductions of works of art officially condemned as bourgeois, records of modern music, and a rich collection of ancient authors in various languages. This luxury of splendid isolation is pardoned him so long as his creative work is effective prop-

[1] [For a definition of "ketman", see cat. 116, pp. 57-60 -- Analyst]

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aganda. To protect his position and his apartment (which he has by the grace of the State), the intellectual is prepared to make any sacrifice or compromise; for the value of privacy in a society that affords little if any isolation is greater than the saying "my home is my castle" can lead one to surmise. Two-way television screens installed in private homes to observe the behavior of citizens in seclusion belong as yet to the future. Hence, by listening to foreign radio stations and reading good books, he profits from a moment of relaxation; that is, of course, if he is alone, for as soon as guests arrive the play begins anew.

Never has there been a close study of how necessary to a man are the experiences which we clumsily call aesthetic. Such experiences are associated with works of art for only an insignificant number of individuals. The majority find pleasure of an aesthetic nature in the mere fact of their existence within the stream of life. In the cities, the eye meets colorful store displays, the diversity of human types. Looking at passers-by, one can guess from their faces the story of their lives. This movement of the imagination when a man is walking through a crowd has an erotic tinge; his emotions are very close to physiological sensations. He rejoices in dresses, in the flash of lights; while, for instance, Parisian markets with their heaps of vegetables and flowers, fish of every shape and hue, fruits, sides of meat dripping with every shade of red offer delights, he need not go seeking them in Dutch or Impressionist painting. He hears snatches of arias, the throbbing of motors mixed with the warble of birds, called greetings, laughter. His nose is assailed by changing odors: coffee, gasoline, oranges, ozone, roasting nuts, perfumes.

Those who have sung of the large cities have consecrated many pages to the description of this joyous immersion in the reservoir of universal life. The swimmer who trusts

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626 himself to the wave, and senses the immensity of the ele-
577 ment that surrounds him, lives through a like emotion. I am thinking of such great singers of the city as Balzac, Baudelaire, and Whitman. It would seem that the exciting and invigorating power of this participation in mass life springs from the feeling of *potentiality*, of constant unexpectedness, of a mystery one ever pursues.

Even the life of the peasants, though it be dulled by brutalizing hand labor, allows for aesthetic expression in the rhythm of custom, the rites of the church, holy pictures, country fairs, native costumes, paper flower decorations, folk sculptures, music, and dances.

In the countries of the New Faith the cities lose their former aspect. The liquidation of small private enterprises gives the streets a stiff and institutional look. The chronic lack of consumer goods renders the crowds uniformly gray and uniformly indigent. When consumer products do appear, they are of a single second-rate quality. Fear paralyzes individuality and makes people adjust themselves as much as possible to the average type in their gestures, clothing, and facial expressions. Cities become filled with the racial type well-regarded by the rulers: short, square men and women, with short legs and wide hips. This is the proletarian type, cultivated to an extreme, thanks to binding aesthetic standards. (We know that these same dumpy women and stocky men could change completely under the influence of films, painting, and fashion, for America has proved that mass communication is at least as important as diet in determining physical appearance.) Streets, factories, and meeting places sport the inevitable red flags and painted slogans. The new buildings are monumental and oppressive, lightness and charm in architecture being condemned as formalistic. The number of aesthetic experiences accessible to a city-dweller in the

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countries of the New Faith is uncommonly limited. The only place of magic is the theater, for the spell of the theater exists even though confined by the commands of socialist realism which define both the contents of a play and stage décor. The tremendous popular success of authors like Shakespeare is due to the fact that their fantasy triumphs even within the bounds of naturalistic stage setting. The hunger for *strangeness* that is so great inside the Imperium should give the rulers pause; yet in all probability it does not, for they consider such longings derelicts from the past.

In the villages, where the entire former pattern of custom is to be abolished through the transformation of peasants into agricultural workers, there still remain survivals of the individual peasant cultures which slowly stratified over the centuries. Still, let us speak frankly, the main supports of this culture were usually the wealthier peasants. The battle against them, and their subsequent need to hide, must lead to the atrophy of peasant dress, decoration of huts, cultivation of private gardens, etc. There is a definite contradiction between the official protection of folklore (as a harmless form of national culture designed to satisfy patriotic tendencies) and the necessities of the new economic structure.

In these conditions aesthetic Ketman has every possibility of spreading. It is expressed not only in that unconscious longing for strangeness which is channeled toward controlled amusements like theater, film, and folk festivals, but also into various forms of escapism. Writers burrow into ancient texts, comment upon and re-edit ancient authors. They write children's books so that their fancy may have slightly freer play. Many choose university careers because research into literary history offers a safe pretext for plunging into the past and for converse

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626 with works of great aesthetic value. The number of trans-
● 517 lators of former prose and poetry multiplies. Painters seek an outlet for their interests in illustrations for children's books, where the choice of gaudy colors can be justified by an appeal to the "naïve" imagination of children. Stage managers, doing their duty by presenting bad contemporary works, endeavor to introduce into their repertoires the plays of Lope de Vega or Shakespeare—that is, those of their plays which are approved by the Center.

Some representatives of the plastic arts are so daring that they reveal their Ketman to no small degree by proclaiming the need of an aesthetic of everyday life, and by establishing special institutes to design fabrics, furniture, glass, and ceramics for industry. There is money for such enterprises, and they find support among the most intelligent dialecticians of the upper circles of the Party. Such efforts deserve respect when one considers that before the Second World War Poland and Czechoslovakia were, aside from Sweden and Finland, the leading countries in interior decoration. Nevertheless, there is no reason why that which passes as formalism in painting and architecture should be tolerated for any length of time in the applied arts.

The rationalization of aesthetic Ketman is obvious: since everything is planned in a socialist economy, why not proceed to a planned satisfaction of the aesthetic needs of human beings? Here, however, we trespass upon the treacherous territory of the demon, Psychology. To admit that a man's eye has need of exultant colors, harmonious forms, or light sunny architecture is to affirm that the taste of the Center is bad. However, even there one can see some progress. They are already erecting skyscrapers patterned after the buildings raised in Chicago about the year 1900. It is possible that in the year 2000 they will officially introduce art forms that today are considered

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modern in the West. But how can one still the thought 626
that aesthetic experiences arise out of something organic, 517
and that the union of color and harmony with fear is as difficult to imagine as brilliant plumage on birds living in the northern tundras?

Professional Ketman[1] is reasoned thus: since I find my- 626
self in circumstances over which I have no control, and 155
since I have but one life and that is fleeting, I should strive to do my best. I am like a crustacean attached to a crag on the bottom of the sea. Over me storms rage and huge ships sail; but my entire effort is concentrated upon clinging to the rock, for otherwise I will be carried off by the waters and perish, leaving no trace behind. If I am a scientist I attend congresses at which I deliver reports strictly adhering to the Party line. But in the laboratory I pursue my research according to scientific methods, and in that alone lies the aim of life. If my work is successful, it matters little how it will be presented and toward whose glory. Discoveries made in the name of a disinterested search for truth are lasting, whereas the shrieks of politicians pass. I must do all they demand, they may use my name as they wish, as long as I have access to a laboratory and money for the purchase of scientific instruments.

If I am a writer, I take pride in my literary achievements. Here, for example, is my treatise on Swift, a Marxist analysis. This type of analysis, which is not synonymous with the Method or the New Faith, makes possible a keen penetration into historical events. Marx had a genius for observation. In following him one is secure against attack, for he is, after all, the prophet; and one can proclaim one's belief in the Method and the New Faith in a preface fulfilling much the same function as dedications to kings or tsars in times past. Here is my translation of a sixteenth-century poem, or my novel

[1] [For a definition of "Ketman," see cat. 116, pp. 57-60 - Analyst]

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626 cause the tragedy of human fate leads to thoughts about
779 the mystery of human destiny. One forgives certain writers like Shakespeare these predispositions, but there is no question of permitting any contemporary author to harbor them. It is for this reason that Greek tragedies are not deemed suitable for theater repertoires. Marx loved the Greek tragedians, but let us not forget that the connection between the New Faith and Marx is rather superficial.

● 517 The New Faith is a Russian creation, and the Russian
626 intelligentsia which shaped it had developed the deepest contempt for all art that does not serve social ends directly. Other social functions of art, probably the most important ones, consistently escaped its understanding. As for poetry, since its sources are hard to differentiate from the sources of all religion, it is singularly exposed to persecution. True, the poet is free to describe hills, trees, and flowers, but if he should feel that boundless exaltation in the face of nature that seized Wordsworth on his visit to Tintern Abbey, he is at once suspect. This is an excellent means of eliminating the legions of bad poets who like to confess their pantheistic flights publicly, but it is also a means of exterminating poetry as a whole and replacing it by jingles little better than the singing commercials broadcast over the radio in America. A painter, in turn, may be attacked quite as easily for using abbreviated and synthesized forms (formalism), as for an excessive love of the beauty of the world, i.e. a contemplative attitude which signifies that he is a metaphysicist by temperament. A musician should see to it that his compositions are easy to translate into the language of common activities (enthusiasm for work, folk festivities, etc.), and that no element remains which is difficult to grasp and hence dangerous. If metaphysical Ketman is tolerated in the "savages," i.e. those who profess the Christian religion, in the artists

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who are considered the educators of society, it is severely punished. 517 626

Ethical Ketman results from opposition to the ethics of the New Faith, which is based on the principle that good and evil are definable solely in terms of service or harm to the interests of the Revolution. Since exemplary behavior of citizens in their inter-relations aids the cause of socialism, great emphasis is placed upon individual morality. 626 577

"The development of a new man" is the key point in the New Faith's program. Demands made upon Party members are exceedingly harsh. One exacts of them no small degree of abstinence. As a result, admission to the Party is not unlike entrance into a religious order; and the literature of the New Faith treats this act with a gravity equal to that with which Catholic literature speaks of the vows of young nuns. The higher one stands in the Party hierarchy, the more attentively is one's private life supervised. Love of money, drunkenness, or a confused love-life disqualify a Party member from holding important offices. Hence the upper brackets of the Party are filled by ascetics devoted to the single cause of Revolution. As for certain human tools, deprived of real influence but useful because of their names, even if they belong to the Party one tolerates or sometimes encourages their weaknesses, for they constitute a guarantee of obedience. The general ethical ideal of the New Faith is puritanical. If it were feasible to lodge all the citizens in cells and release them only for work or for political meetings, that would undoubtedly be most desirable. But alas, one must make concessions to human nature. Procreation is possible only as a result of sexual relations between men and women, and one must take this inconvenience into account.

The "new man" is conditioned to acknowledge the

1 [For a definition of "ketman, see cat. 116, pp. 57-60.--Analyst]

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626 517 the people's democracies because the new ethic is of recent inculcation, whereas the ethic vanquished by the New Faith was ensconced there for centuries. One can never foresee when and in whom this Ketman will appear, which makes for an element of surprise. Individuals who give one every reason to suppose that they do not denounce others turn out to be inveterate informers; individuals who are apparently most indifferent to "prejudices," show themselves inexplicably loyal toward their friends and even toward strangers. Since this Ketman augments the difficulties of controlling the citizens' thoughts, it is diligently sought out and penalized; yet the number of situations to which it can be applied is so great that it often eludes all manner of pressure.

The inhabitants of Western countries little realize that millions of their fellow-men, who seem superficially more or less similar to them, live in a world as fantastic as that of the men from Mars. They are unaware of the perspectives on human nature that Ketman opens. Life in constant internal tension develops talents which are latent in man. He does not even suspect to what heights of cleverness and psychological perspicacity he can rise when he is cornered and must either be skillful or perish. The survival of those best adapted to mental acrobatics creates a human type that has been rare until now. The necessities which drive men to Ketman sharpen the intellect.

626 517 Whoever would take the measure of intellectual life in the countries of Central or Eastern Europe from the monotonous articles appearing in the press or the stereotyped speeches pronounced there, would be making a grave error. Just as theologians in periods of strict orthodoxy expressed their views in the rigorous language of the Church, so the writers of the people's democracies make use of an accepted special style, terminology, and linguis-

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tic ritual. What is important is not what someone said but what he wanted to say, disguising his thought by removing a comma, inserting an "and," establishing this rather than another sequence in the problems discussed. Unless one has lived there one cannot know how many titanic battles are being fought, how the heroes of Ketman are falling, what this warfare is being waged over. Obviously, people caught up in this daily struggle are rather contemptuous of their compatriot political émigrés. A surgeon cannot consider a butcher his equal in dexterity; just so a Pole, Czech, or Hungarian practiced in the art of dissimulation smiles when he learns that someone in the emigration has called him a traitor (or a swine) at the very moment when this traitor (or swine) is engaged in a match of philosophical chess on whose outcome the fate of fifteen laboratories or twenty ateliers depends. They do not know how one pays—those abroad do not know. They do not know what one buys, and at what price.

Ketman as a social institution is not entirely devoid of advantages. In order to evaluate them, one need only look at life in the West. Westerners, and especially Western intellectuals, suffer from a special variety of *taedium vitae;* their emotional and intellectual life is too dispersed. Everything they think and feel evaporates like steam in an open expanse. Freedom is a burden to them. No conclusions they arrive at are binding: it may be so, then again it may not. The result is a constant uneasiness. The happiest of them seem to be those who become Communists. They live within a wall which they batter themselves against, but which provides them with a resistance that helps them define themselves. Steam that once evaporated into the air becomes a force under pressure. An even greater energy is generated in those who must hide their Communist convictions, that is, who must practice Ketman, a